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## PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Medical Class of the University of Pennsylvania,

WHICH LED TO THE

EMPLOYMENT OF A DISTINGUISHED ARTIST TO MAKE A PORTRAIT OF

DR. PHYSICK,

Subsequently presented to the Medical Faculty. Also, a Brief Sketch of the Address delivered on the Occasion, by the Students; and a Condensed Report of the sentiments expressed in reply, by Dr. HORNER and Dr. HARE.

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*Class of 1836-7*  
*Pennsylvania University. Dept. of Medicine*  
*Class of 1837.*

*1837 3*



# PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

## *Medical Class of the University of Pennsylvania.*

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Several members of the Medical Class of this session, having at its commencement expressed a wish, that some manifestation of their esteem for the character and talents of their illustrious Emeritus Professor, Dr. Philip S. Physick, should be made, it was determined that a meeting of the class should be called, which accordingly was done for the 3d December. The meeting having been organized by appointing Mr. Jacob Strobart of South Carolina to the chair, the following preamble and resolutions were offered by Mr. Carter N. Berkeley of Virginia, and unanimously adopted:

Whereas, the Medical Class entertain the highest esteem and veneration for the talents and character of Philip Syng Physick, which have advanced their illustrious possessor to the first rank in the science of medicine, and at the same time elevated the reputation and extended the usefulness of the institution, which for so many years experienced the benefit of his arduous labour, in the department of Surgery and Anatomy, they are desirous of publicly manifesting their admiration of those talents, and are at the same time anxious to express the deep emotions of regard and attachment inspired by the contemplation of his many virtues, both as a practitioner and as a private citizen. Be it therefore

*Resolved*, That a committee of six be appointed to wait upon Dr. Physick, to request him to permit his likeness to be taken by any artist, whom he may select, and at such time as may be most suitable to himself. The likeness to be placed in the public lecture room of this institution, as a lasting token of the esteem and admiration of the Medical Class, of the session 1836-37, for the character, talents, and acquirements of Dr. Physick.

Be it also *Resolved*, That the same committee be instructed to request the faculty of this institution, to permit a copy of these resolutions, along with any communications that may pass between Dr. Physick and the committee to be recorded among the annals and proceedings of their body.

Messrs. F. Campbell Stewart, Carter N. Berkeley, T. L. Halsey Creighton, Thomas T. Willis, Seaman D. Sinkler, and Jacob Strobart, having been appointed the committee to carry the resolutions into effect after having obtained Dr. Physick's consent, made arrangements with Mr. Inman of New York, who had been selected, and on the morning of the 22d February, presented the portrait to the Medical Faculty, in the presence of many of the trustees, several strangers, and the class.

Mr. Berkeley addressed the faculty essentially as follows:

He appeared before them as one of a committee appointed by the medical class for the purpose of carrying into effect a resolution adopted at one of their general meetings.

The medical students of this Institution, said Mr. Berkeley, have ever contemplated with just pride, the characters of those who, in days that are past, contributed to elevate its reputation to the first rank, not only among the colleges of our own land, but in fair rivalry with the most celebrated and time-honoured of Europe, however supported by regal wealth and influence.

The distinguished physicians in whose efforts these results had originated, had long since gone from among us; but had left bright examples for imitation, and a fame that must endure so long as the school which they had founded should continue a beacon of medical science. But among their successors, there was one still spared by kind heaven, whose name had been associated with all that was honourable and distinguished in medicine: whose talents had for many years been directly serviceable to the University, and whose influence, though unseen, was still *felt* beneficially.

Mr. Berkeley, after narrating the proceedings which had led to the production of the portrait, said:—

Gentlemen, the purpose for which we have assembled is, that we may commit this picture to you, in trust for the Medical Department of the University of Pennsylvania, with a request that you have it permanently placed in one of the lecture rooms of the Medical Hall.

For the present meeting, the anatomical theatre has been preferred, as the arena in which Dr. Physick was accustomed to lecture; as the sphere of his latest efforts in the cause of medical science; and as the place in which he took his final leave of the duties of the anatomical chair. But although, from his physical infirmities, neither his chair nor his patients could any longer have the benefit of his services, he was not the less revered by those who were now united to do him honour.

In the name of our fellow students, Gentlemen, we consign this picture to your special charge, with the request that you will bequeath it to those



who may be your successors, as a precious legacy: that when its esteemed and venerable original shall have rested from his labours; when yourselves and those around you shall have gone to that bourne "whence no traveller returns," and not one of all now present shall be left to tell the story of this days' ceremony, a token may yet remain as an impressive tribute of the admiration and respect of the students of this department of the University, for our venerable Emeritus Professor, Dr. Philip Syng Physick.

In reply to the preceding Address, Dr. Horner, Professor of Anatomy, and Dean of the Medical Faculty, expressed substantially, the following sentiments:

He adverted to the emotions naturally excited in him, not only from his participating in the admiration and esteem universally displayed towards Dr. Physick; but also in consequence of the gratitude and affection awakened by the efficient patronage, to which he was so much indebted. He alleged that the Medical Faculty highly approved of the eulogy which had been uttered by the students respecting the founders of the school, as members of which they were now assembled; and that they likewise approved highly of the applause bestowed on the enlightened patronage which had afforded to those distinguished men an appropriate sphere for their genius and acquirements. The Faculty were grateful to their pupils for the good will and opinion displayed towards their Alma Mater, and were pleased to perceive the just sense which they entertained of the professional merit of their venerable colleague, the Emeritus Professor.

After stating various instances in which the professional ability of that great physician had been demonstrated, the Dean proceeded to make some interesting remarks respecting those traits in his character which had, in his opinion, mainly led to his success as a surgical operator. Upon this undertaking, he ventured with great diffidence of his capacity to do justice to a character of which the features were so strongly marked. He considered the mind of the Emeritus Professor, as eminently sagacious, logical, and energetic; and that with these qualifications there was associated an eye, accurate and penetrating; a hand, which never faltered, and which was pre-eminently delicate in its sense of touch, and in the precision and gentleness of its movements; a forethought, which guarded against contingencies which might interfere with success, and provided every requisite by which it might be promoted; a presence of mind, and an intellectual composure, which, notwithstanding the most intense anxiety for the welfare of his patient, allowed him the full benefit of all his admirable endowments, arising from nature, education, and experience.

To these endowments, tending, during the most precarious and difficult operations to insure a favourable result, there was superadded a most con-

scientious, zealous, and vigilant attention until the fate of the patient was ascertained. In short, the Dean ascribed to the Emeritus Professor, a rare association of moral, intellectual, and physical attributes, tending to qualify the possessor for success in medical and chirurgical practice.

Contemplating the presentation of the portrait as a most liberal and appropriate testimonial of the just estimate put by the donors on the pretensions of a valued and revered colleague, the Medical Faculty would gratefully accept of the donation as a most sacred and valuable deposit.

The Dean hoped that this picture might constitute a beacon, tending to guide and encourage both the students and professors in the Medical Department of the University, in their efforts to ascend that path of professional eminence, already so well surmounted by the great and good man whose image would now be constantly before them.

Dr. Hare said that he was wholly unprepared to express his sentiments on the occasion, having presumed that whatever reply might be due to the address of the students, would be offered on the part of the faculty collectively, not on that of any one of its members. But yet, as in replying for the faculty, allusion had been made, naturally and properly, to the relation in which the Dean, by whom the reply was made, had stood to our Emeritus Professor, he, (Dr. Hare,) hoped he might be excused for occupying the time of the audience by a few words, expressive of the emotions which the scene excited in his bosom, in consequence of the intercourse which had existed between himself and the distinguished individual of whom the picture before them had been made.

When he contemplated that portrait, Dr. Hare alleged himself at a loss to analyze the sentiments to which it gave rise, but he believed them to be nearly allied to those which would be awakened by the likeness of an elder brother or of a father. Certainly they were the mingled offspring of admiration for talent, esteem for virtue, and gratitude for the most zealous, effectual and disinterested services.

If upon the ground that to our parents, in the usual course of nature, we are indebted for our existence, the sentiment of filial piety be among those which we are pre-eminently bound to cherish, shall we not be actuated by a similar sentiment towards the being to whose skilful assiduity we, or those whom we love as ourselves, are indebted for the preservation of life?

In the case of the practitioner, who in striving to relieve affliction, is impelled by the usual desire of professional emolument, a reciprocity of advantage may arise between him and his patient. But it must be far otherwise, when, as in the case in point, the physician resolutely refuses emolument, seeking no other reward than that of successfully exercising his genius, his knowledge and his industry, for the relief of the afflicted.

The donation of the picture by the students, who were for the most part

only acquainted with Dr. Physick through the medium of his high professional reputation, was at once a striking evidence of the extent of that reputation, and of the generous enthusiasm which American medical students are capable of feeling towards those whom they believe to merit professionally their admiration and esteem. It was unnecessary that the justifiable grounds on which the donors of the picture had acted should be insisted upon by him, after the eloquent exposition of them, made both in their address, and in that of the Dean.—But he had felt it opportune, and most congenial with his feelings and sense of what was due to his great and good colleague, to state to those of his pupils who, from the remoteness of their abodes, might not be aware of the fact, that however high the pretensions of that distinguished individual might be to professional ability, his merits in the circle in which he had practised, was far from resting solely on that basis. In the sphere of his practice, he had fairly enthroned himself upon the gratitude and esteem, as well as the admiration of his patients.

In a letter addressed to Dr. Physick a short time before his recent visit to Europe, he had with the utmost sincerity declared, that by no member of his family was the name of Dr. Physick ever mentioned, without an accompanying emotion of gratitude and esteem.

This declaration had subsequently received a practical confirmation in the effusions of the youthful heart of his second son, who had been attended by the excellent Doctor in more than one dangerous and protracted illness. During a parting visit to Dr. Physick, shortly before embarking for England, this lad alleged spontaneously, with great emotion, that as one to whom he had been indebted for life and health, he felt, and should always feel towards him, as towards a second father.

Dr. Hare regretted that he had not been better prepared to do justice to the occasion; but hoped that what he had said would be received with the indulgence usually accorded to effusions springing from good feeling and good intentions, however ill supported by embellishments resulting from imagination, or a successful exertion of intellectual ability.



